

The Secret Speech of *Lirnyky* and *Kobzari* Encoding a Life Style

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In Ukraine, minstrels have been part of the folk tradition for centuries. There were two types of minstrels: *kobzari* who played a stringed musical instrument called the *kobza*, later to develop into the *bandura*, and *lirnyky*, who played the crank-driven hurdy-gurdy called the *lira*. These minstrels were traveling musicians – and much more besides. They were major sources of historical and religious information and, interestingly, most of them were blind. This infirmity made them dependent upon others for their livelihood, but they were not beggars. On the contrary, they were well-respected by the general populace. As with other professional groups, they belonged to guilds and new members, young children, went through an extensive apprenticeship period. Minstrels also spoke using a secret language called *lebiis 'ka mova*, henceforth the Lebian language (argot) or Lebian.

It should be pointed out immediately that this was not a full-fledged language with a distinct phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic system. On the contrary, its underlying structure was that of contemporary Ukrainian, but crucial standard Ukrainian lexemes – nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals and verbs – were replaced by others. To an outsider, i.e., one not initiated into the guild, who might chance to hear a conversation in this argot, it might sound like Ukrainian, but, except for such ancillary parts of speech such as conjunctions, prepositions, interjections and particles – words that carry only relational information – it would be entirely unintelligible. This was reinforced by the fact that Lebian lexemes would be inflected – declined or conjugated – exactly as analogous Ukrainian words would be.

Furthermore, the speaker of the argot did not have to replace every plaintext lexeme by an argotic one. Let us examine two brief passages. Prayers would always be said in plaintext, but they would be prefaced by the following phrase:

О, фез комуніський, до тебе кизітаю.

О, Боже ласкавий, до Тебе молюся.

O merciful God, I pray to you.

The nominative singular masculine ending *-yj* of the adjective *komunis 'k-* (merciful) is taken from standard Ukrainian, just as the first person singular present ending *-'u* of the verb *kyzitaj-*. Most works quote the humorous song:

Lebian	Ukrainian	English
Коби мені кумса сяна, А до кумси ще й тирина І бутельбух вовчаку, Каравона чорнобрива.	Коби мені хлібець святий, А до хліба трошки сира, А до сира склянка пива І дівчина чорнобрива.	If I had some holy bread, And some cheese to go along with the bread, And a glass of beer, [And] a girl with black eyebrows.

Here again readers familiar with Ukrainian will see that Lebian words are inflected exactly as lexemes in the standard language.

All this must be kept in mind hereinafter whenever the word “language” is applied to the Lebian argot.

Novices learned Lebian during their apprenticeship and mature minstrels used it amongst themselves, and only when they could not be overheard. While the language was a deep secret, eventually certain minstrels were willing to dictate a dictionary of sorts to scholars such as Studyns'ky and Malinka. Thus, we have a good idea of the lexical items which comprised Lebian. What is this language and what was its purpose? What do the lexical items included in the language – and those omitted from it – tell us about minstrel life?

Scholars interested in minstrel life observed the existence of a secret language early on (Hnatiuk: 1-73, Khotkevych: 1: 455-518, Iemets': 81-2). They also noted that training in the Lebian language was part of the learning process. Apprentices would learn it from their master along with their growing command of the instrument, its repertoire, and the repertoire of minstrel songs. This fact is reflected in the etymology of the term used for the language itself, since *lebi* means master minstrel and thus the Lebian language is the language of fully-trained professionals.

As living speech, Lebian had numerous dialects. This applies both to pronunciation and word choice. Different Lebian words might be used for the same concept in different geographical areas. Nevertheless, many lexemes can be found throughout Ukraine. Furthermore, the phonological features of Ukrainian dialects are reflected in the Lebian language and the dialect boundaries of Lebian and Ukrainian are approximately the same.

Scholars are of different opinions as to the purpose of the Lebian language, but two views dominate. One may be called the recognition theory. It maintains that musicians used this language when no strangers were present as a means of mutual recognition. By using the language, musicians let each other know that they had completed the full course of instruction, including the mastery of Lebian, and thus were members in good standing of a guild or minstrel brotherhood. A musician who had not completed the full course of instruction would either be ignorant of the Lebian language or have an imperfect command of it. Thus, lack of language mastery would betray a person who did not have the right to practice the craft of the *lirnyk* or *kobzar*.

The other explanation may be called the conspiracy theory. It maintains that the *kobza* and *lira* players functioned on the periphery of society and were often at odds with the law. According to this theory, Lebian was needed, not for relations within the community of minstrels, but to protect this community from the outside world. Minstrels needed a secret language, it was thought, to hide their activities from the civil authorities, and even the general populace, because some of what they did might be construed as, or was in fact, outside the law. To support this view, scholars cite the fact that having an argot, or secret language, is a characteristic typical of outlaw groups. For such groups, secret speech permits the planning and execution of illegal acts without the fear of detection. Pravdiuk (34-7) actually cites specific and striking examples of the Lebian language being used for conspiratorial purposes.

This is not the place to give a definitive answer to the question of whether Lebian was used for recognition or for conspiratorial purposes. Arguments can be made for both points of view. It is generally

believed the common people respected the *kobzari* and *lirnyky*, so they could hardly have been considered outlaws with a need to conceal their activities. At the same time, it is a fact that tsarist police and other civil authorities often persecuted minstrels, viewing their singing as subversive and thus, illegal. Minstrels have often had to hide from the powers that be, a fact that lends credence to the conspiracy theory. (Kononenko, 30-32)

Conspiracy theory and recognition theory aside, however, Lebian can give us a great deal of information about Ukrainian minstrels, how they lived, and what was important to them. While working on the lexicon (over a thousand lexemes), it became apparent that this argot gives a remarkable picture of the life style of the *kobzari* and *lirnyky*. It shows us what they talked about, the conditions under which they lived and worked, and the people with whom they had to deal.

The most complete dictionary of the Lebian language was prepared on the basis of the materials collected and compiled by Horbach (7-44). It is limited by the fact that the data in it was collected primarily from *lirnyky* in Galicia; less material has been collected from *kobzari* in the eastern half of Ukraine. Still, there is enough commonality between Horbach's work and the information that we do have directly from *kobzari* to assume, as stated earlier, that Lebian is a single entity, reflecting both *kobzar* and *lirnyk* life. It should also be noted that Kononenko has demonstrated that *kobzari* and *lirnyky* were one unit, belonging to the same guilds and often learning from each other, both during apprenticeship and subsequently. Thus, using Horbach's dictionary, supplemented by other materials as available, we can attempt an analysis of the life style of all Ukrainian minstrels as reflected in their secret language. We will group the lexemes of the language into categories, and then examine these categories, discussing both what is in them and what is omitted and what this shows us about minstrel life.

It should be noted that Horbach's work lists some thousand lexemes, and, in the opinion of some linguists, a speaker must know a minimum of two thousand words to communicate effectively in any language. If this is true, then the corpus presented by Horbach satisfied half of that need. What minstrels must have done, then, is use Lebian to encode only the most important words; they said the rest of what they needed to communicate in plain Ukrainian, without encryption. This makes Lebian even more effective as a key to minstrel life. If this secret language contains the most crucial concepts only, then it points us to the most important aspects of minstrelsy.

Looking at grammatical categories first, we find that the overwhelming majority of the lexemes are nouns, adjectives and verbs; pronouns, numerals and adverbs are far fewer. The corpus contains no prepositions, conjunctions, interjections or particles, which is hardly surprising because ancillary words have little or no content that would require encoding. It is the nouns and verbs that bear the primary meanings and need to be disguised by a secret argot.

Examining the data by grammatical category, we find that **nouns** can be divided into several semantic groups. First are the words that name and describe human beings:

Lebian	Ukrainian	English
мóздip	людина	human
мex	чoлoвiк	man
páxa	жiнка	woman

свирит, хведня	дитина	child
лобзюк, теплюх, отерплюшók	хлопець	boy
каравóна, карига, раклі, каравінча	дівч(ин)а	girl
йоруха, йóра киврійка	старуха, стара пані	old woman
херáне, хирáни	люди	people

Next are parts of the body, namely the head:

гла́да, главда́, лавда́	голова	head
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and its parts

чимéрсьи [чимéрся]	волосся	hair
слухóмка, слихтó	вухó	ear
зікрó	око	eye
зікрá	очі	eyes
но́скотинь	ніс	nose
хвéйло, фéйло	рот	mouth
лизинь	язик	tongue
кусьмóрники, мóскутні	зуби	teeth

other body parts include:

херута, хирута, рутáвка	рука	arm, hand
нахирник	палець	finger
ходу́ха, хóдня	нога	leg, foot
пліхті́, стипра́	плечі́	shoulders
комрі́й, химро́	живіт	belly
кузад	зад	behind
стиз, стил, стига	задниця	anus
псил	пеніс	penis
ту́ха	вульва	vulva

Internal anatomy is poorly represented and, if *belly* is discounted, we have only

кохта́вка	кість	bone
красі́нка, красі́мка	кров	blood

There are names for various human ailments, for example,

ка́ліпний	сліпий	blind man
тро́няшний	хворий	sick person
шмура́к	дурак	fool

as well as nouns for such diseases as

трясо́мниця, трахо́мниця, трихо́мниця	гарячка, лихорадка, пропасниця	fever
трунька	тиф	typhus
ругня́чка	холера	cholera

Last in the category of words dealing with people we should include

ха́ля	смерть, труп, мерлець	death, corpse
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and, perhaps also such words as

кирди́мня	життя	life
ко́зум	розум	intellect
кіма́ня	спання	sleep
йо́ристь	старість	old age

Kinship terms are well represented and include the following terms for people and for actions that create kin relationships:

кирдимний	крєвний, свояк	blood relative, in-law
яничиня	сватання	wooing
ставєр(а), штавєра	шлюб, подружжя	marriage
яник, янига, юнико	весілля	wedding
лебій, липетень, швед, шкред	дід(о)	grandfather
штуба, цуба, цюба	баба	grandmother
батій	батько	father
маниця, омáниця	мати	mother
курдиміль	дядько	uncle
курдимілька	тітка	aunt
мех	чоловік	husband
ра́ха	жінка	wife
áндрус, яндрус	брат	brother
áндруска, яндруска	сестра	sister
і́о́нус, юнець, юньчик, нюньчик	син	son
і́о́ну́ска, юньчи́ця, нюньчи́чка	дочка	daughter
бахтій	тесть	wife's father
ставро́чник	кум	godfather
ставро́чни́ця	кума	godmother
отерплюшо́к, оте́плюх, терпелюк, трепелюк	парубок	unmarried young man
ра́ха, трепели́ця	молоди́ця	young married woman
поставро́чник	похресник	godson
поставро́чни́ця	похресни́ця	goddaughter

as well as

скульба́нка	коханка	lover (female)
кульба́нок	кохане́ць	lover (male)
шлягун	ловелас	lothario
нюнька	песті́й(ка)	spoiled child
перекриво́шниця, покриво́шниця	покритка	unmarried mother

Inasmuch as only men could be professional minstrels in the nineteenth century, it should come as no surprise that the words for husband's father or mother are missing from the linguistic corpus.

Society and its classes are reflected in words such as

киврї́й, гаврї́й, каврї́й	пан	mister
каврї́йка, киврї́йка, гаврї́ї́ха	пані	missis
трепе́ла киврї́йка	панна	miss
поха́зник	господар	master
поха́зниця	господи́ня	mistress
острочи́нець	гість	guest
шо́сті, острочи́нці	гості	guests
мугир	хлоп	peasant
нака́читель	начальник	boss
наю́хник	наймит	hireling (male)
наю́хниця,	найми́чка,	hireling (female)
слуго́нниця	служанка	maid
сто́тень, сто́донь	багач	rich man
порутник	бідак	poor man
порутниця	біда́чка	poor woman
шу́я	бідний	impoverished man
шуйство	бідно́та	the poor
кубра́к, липетень	прошак	beggar

буций, укираний	п'яний	drunk
укира́чка	жінка п'яниця	drunkard (female)
кира́ка, укира́га	п'яниця	drunkard (male)
накирвання	п'яничення	drinking
ряха	чепурня	fastidious woman
неряха	нехлюйна жінка	slovenly woman
ко́льба	повія	whore
клімута, клімутник	зłodий	thief
розкульник	розбійник	brigand
кирхушник	карник	criminal

Human relationships and conflicts can be seen in such words as

оша́р, оша́рник	торг, ярмарок	trade, market
гавлиста	товар	goods
лубуненя	сварка	quarrel
ко́псання	бійка, драка	fight
клімута	крадіж	theft

The argot also has a lexicon for civil authority:

тирлик	цар	tsar
тирлиця	цариця	tsaritsa
накачур	бурмістр, війт	mayor, reeve
го́ргуль	жандарм	gendarme
нака́то́рський	соцький	country policeman
йо́риста, йо́руста	староста	elder
гальо́мний нака́читель	становий пристав	assistant bailiff
я́ршина́, йо́ршина́	старшина	officer
беца́к	салдат	soldier
матла́нник	фіансер	financier
зі́тник, скере́тник	урядник	official

Clearly, the musicians had to deal with the guardians of the law, because we have the words

бікуце́ль, го́ргуль	поліцай	policeman
стерего́мник	сторож	guard
ді́кончик, ді́кунчик	десятник	constable
бікуце́льники, шулі́ція	поліція	police
стерего́мка, шпарута	варта	guardhouse
біку́ція, лямос	в'язниця	prison

The musicians dealt with people of various professions, for example:

кура́шник, кудри́пник	музика(нт)	musician
кугра́чник, либіща́к, липко́	лірник	<i>lirnyk</i>
кугра́чник	скрипник	violinist
повандзо́рник, провандзи́рник	проводир	guide (of the blind)
вко́рник, науко́рник	учитель	teacher
лі́корник	лікар	physician
ре́псани́к	писар	scribe
беца́к, го́ргуль	во́як	soldier
кула́шник	стрілець	rifleman
возмо́нник	ві́зник	teamster
жуклі́йник, кові́зник	коваль	smith
махли́шник, махли́чник	косар	reaper
воша́рник	купець	merchant
лопо́тник	молотник	thresher
лопсти́рник, татко́, явли́дник, авли́дник	пастух	herder

махлишник, махличник	різник	butcher
опукáр, лопухáр	швець	cobbler
гертишник	шинкар	tavernkeeper
накévричник, махирник	рукавичник	glove maker

The lexicon dealing with clothing is rather limited. We have the clothing that would be worn by both sexes:

сип'яг(а)	свитка	coat
махирниця, накévниця, рутáвниця	рукавиця	glove
нахирник	перстень	ring
шуманчá	опанча	overcoat
бучмаки	черевики	shoes
óпук(и), лóпук(и), óбоки	чобіт, чоботи	boot
кравáтка	повивач	swaddling band

Clothing worn exclusively by women includes

филистка, хвельюстка	хустина	kerchief
застіжмóрник	стяжка	ribbon
патéри	коралі	coral beads
чухниця	спідниця	skirt
фартійка, фортійóк	запаска	apron

while that worn typically by men lists

мислюжник, вислюжник	капелюх	hat
камéха, камуха	шапка	cap
сип'яг(а)	сіряк	grey coat
на́сти, на́сики, насті́ги, насті́жники	штани	trousers
звертій	пояс	belt

Nature is reflected in such words as

сві́томка	світ	world
сянко	сонце	sun
нака́чій, макохтій, сянник	місяць	moon
рахтій	дощ	rain
ра́хта	сльота	rainy weather
сі́вер	сніг	snow
тери́га, тири́га, три́га	земля	soil
отро́піль, стропі́ля, митро́пільи	поле	field
ямóшниця	яма	pit
сві́гра	гора	mountain
де́лька, де́йка, сугá	вода	water
дильма́	рі́ка	river
де́льман, стичи́нь	став	pond
шалóто, шолóто	болото	mud
шму́ра	бруд	dirt
дуля́с, дуля́сник	вогонь	fire

Flora is represented primarily by edible plants:

сухéчка, су́ячка, сéв'ячка	гречка	buckwheat
ризавка, сапсаї	кукурудза	maize
бураві́нь, чухлі́й	овес	oats
цесó	просо, пшоно	millet
яшпу́рка, яшкурни́ця	пшени́ця	wheat
бурві́нь, бурбі́ль	ячмі́нь	barley
букші́й, гаври́шник	бі́б	lima bean

гавриш	горох	pea
гавришниця, букшійка	фасоля	bean
ботняк, кремёд	буряк	beet
тиріжник, терижник	картопля	potato
білюга	редька	radish
морзуля, мерзуля	цибуля	onion
креміз, кремез, морзник	часник	garlic
орносноп	мак	poppy
оксютина	садовина	fruit
стеблюшниця	вишня	sour cherry
рута́вка, ста́вка, хта́вка, хруста́вка	грушка	pear
стеблига	сливка	plum
терна́вка	слива	plum tree
кра́сінка, красі́мка	черешня	cherry
веслюко, віслюко	яблуко	apple
віслюжниця, веслюшниця	яблуня	apple tree
ло́скотні	горіхи	nuts
дулі́би	гарбузи	pumpkins
багла́йка, бала́йка	гриб	mushroom
баглаї	гриби	mushrooms
лепуха, лопуха	капуста	cabbage
кра́сінка, красі́мка, сте́блюк	ягода	berry

There are some words for non-edible plants and plant products and these include

о́ксим, вошут	ліс	forest
коно́палки, кадрó	коноплі	hemp
о́брутки	дрова	lumber
дуляс	паливо	fuel
патéр	папір	paper
лоскоти́ра, лоскотирó	полотно	linen
віхрó, вяхрó	сіно	hay
цва́хта, махля́рка	січка	chopped hay (fodder)
веслю́я, вислю́га, мислю́га	солома	straw

A similar situation can be seen in the words for fauna. There are many words for animals that serve as food and also a relatively high number of terms for creatures found in everyday life. The groups include aquatic animals:

ле́шень, ле́шні	рак(и)	crayfish
пса́лка, пца́лка	риба	fish
алюшник	оселедець	herring

and also amphibians:

парна́та	жаба	frog
зверті́й	гадюка, вуж	snake

There are words for birds:

о́бруте́нь, фія́вене́нь, фія́нь, фія́н	голуб	dove
тара́ндій	горобець	sparrow
га́рбат	гусак	gander
га́рбут, арбу́тка, гарба́тка	гуска	goose
га́рбатя	гуся	gosling
плаву́те́нь	індик	turkey
ворна́чка, са́павка	качка	duck
ворна́чка, варна́га, арна́чка	курка	hen
арна́к	півень	rooster

and for mammals:

мерхлі́й	баран	ram
ме́рхля	вівця	sheep (singular)
мерхлі́, ме́хлі	вівці	sheep (plural)
швахт	цап	goat
керх, кирха	свиня	pig
кирхуня	порося	piglet
ва́лот, ва́лта	кінь	horse
волотиха, волотиця	кобила	mare
воло́т	осел	donkey
гавлид, явлид	бик, віл	bull, ox
гавлидка, авлида, гавлита	корова	cow
гавлидя, явлидиня	теля	calf

Household animals that do not serve as food can be isolated as a category which includes:

мо́тень, мо́скотень	кіт	cat (male)
мотниха	кітка, кішка	cat (female)
мотня	котя	kitten
скел, скіл, скіць, скіцяка	пес	dog
ско́лиха, скелиха, скилиця	сука	bitch
скиля	песя, щенюк	puppy
па́сінка	миша	mouse

Words for wild animals are limited and only the set of words

лиха, лига	вовк	wolf (male)
лиджиха	вовчиця	wolf (female)

is widely attested. The insects included in the lexicon are:

цвіхлі́	бджоли	bees
цвіхлі́	муха	fly
циза, сиза	воша	louse
ка́лута	блоха	flea

Here one can place substances of animal origin, namely

мерхлячка	вовна	wool
кидрó	прядиво	yarn
сип'яження	сукно	broadcloth

Animal "products" such as

балюжник, гнойо́шник, осняк	гній	dung
хало́	кал, лайно	feces

might be considered part of this category also.

Food terminology, besides the aforementioned flora and fauna, includes the following:

трі́йка	обід	dinner
куче́ря, трі́йка	вечеря	supper
бо́тень	борщ	<i>borshch</i> [beet soup]
ставре́ники	вареники	<i>varenyky</i> [stuffed dumplings]
фіявні́	голибці́	<i>holubtsi</i> [cabbage rolls]
букша	кваша	sour mash [a dish made from fermented rye flour and buckwheat grain]
крихти	крупы	grits
ле́кша, ликша	каша	porridge
шутня	кулеша	corn meal
крісо́	м'ясо	meat

степурка	печеня	roast
киршутина	солонина	fatback
сіводне крісо, сіверець	студенець	headcheese
кіта, кита, кіто	яйце	egg
ламáхи	печиво	baked goods
бухтáвка, яшпурка	булка	roll
мілясник	медяник	honey cake
скрутинь	обарінок	pretzel
пундій, кондій	пиріг	pie
пундії курляні	варені пироги	boiled pies
пундії стипурені	печені пироги	baked pies
сухмóрники, сухмаї	сухарі	biscuits
сумáк, сунéта, кумса, кунсо	хліб	bread
трусьня, трузна	мука	flour
ковісто	тісто	dough
свісло, весло	масло	butter
альмо, галімо, гаїмо	молоко	milk
тирин(ь), тирина	сир	cheese
ковирхинá	сметана	sour cream
муляс, маляс, (г)омиляс	мед	honey
лобзій	олій	oil
гáлусть	сіль	salt
гомиляс, омелясник, омиляс, солудкемне	цукор	sugar

There are several words designating drinks, such as

головчáк, вовчáк	пиво	beer
бушнó	вино	wine
(г)артиха, гериха	горілка	whiskey
красімник	арак	arrack, raki
баклун, матлáн	тютюн	tobacco
мутлáха	нюхальна табака	snuff
бéнник, матлїйка	папіроска	cigarette

which can be placed in this category also.

The mineral lexicon is limited to such substances as

кувізо	залізо	iron
курібло	срібло	silver
пітрус, пётрос, кетряк	камінь	stone

Physical surroundings are reflected in such words as

шусто	місто	city
хóро, хори	село	village

and then

хазá	хата	house
шім, шом	дім	home

along with such architectural details as

пóхазь, світлоха, острокой	кімната, покій	room
пóхазь	світлиця	parlor
кутига	комора	chamber
кувирх	дах	roof
степур, стéпир, остепір	піч	stove
острокóмин, свистак	комин	chimney
зікрó	вікно	window

ставёрка	кватирка	ventilator
скрипотá, фірта	двері	door
закаплóнниця	клямка	doorknob

Other household and farmstead structures and features include

пóхазь	господа	homestead
обрутяч	пліт	fence
переліскальник	перелаз	passage in a hedge
брамóшниця	брама	gate
скрипотá	ворота	gate
хвірт, фірта, похвітря	двір, подвір'я	yard
дéйниця, сужник,	криниця	spring
сівраниця, сівирка	колодязь	well
кулуйка, лопóтня	стодола	barn
кирхушник, кулуйник, хлівóшник	хлів	stable
обрутниця	дривітня	wood shed
лопóтня, лопóтник	тік	threshing floor
лопстирка	толока	common pasture land
сівгород, свіврód	горód	garden
оксют	сад	orchard
бзика, мілясниця	пасіка	apiary
бзичник, мілясник	вулик	beehive
кóтниця	возівня	coach house
кирхушник	свинюшник	pigsty

Words for village buildings, objects, and features outside the farmstead include:

ковізниця, жуклі́йниця	кузня	smithy
дергун, дергунниця	млин	mill
лобзі́йня	олі́йниця	oil press
каня, капі́лія, капéля, пóхазь	корчма, шинок	tavern

as well as

(в)óстрóка, востóрка,	дорóга	road
рівóшник	рів	ditch
дéлюшник, перевандзирник	пором	ferry

The lexicon of personal objects is understandably fairly rich. Here we have, first of all,

кугрá, курга, кудóнка	лі́ра	lira
кугрáчка	скрипка	violin

Such personal items as

чихмóрник	гребінь	comb
матлі́йка	люлька	pipe
бікута́, біштур(á), обруто́к, бікостур	палиця, патик	stick, staff
маскóрник	щітка	brush
ші́нка, шéнька, захарбéла, захарба́ник	торба	bag
захарбу́т	клунок	sack

seem to be important, as are eating utensils:

кóвтур	горщок	pot
кубанок	дзбанок	jar
ковту́рниця	кувшин	ladle
карабéлька, кара́бля	ложка	spoon
мéхир, нéхер, махлич	ніж	knife
скáтэля, скітэ́льня	миска, тарілка	bowl, plate
жуклі́йка, шуфлі́йка	пляшка	bottle

са́басний курля	самовар	samovar
жуклі́йка, шуфлі́йка, буте́льбух	склянка	tumbler
жоклі́я, буте́льбух	чарка	glass

There is a fairly large assortment of words for furniture and household items such as

бурве́та	верета	coarse cover
хвильник	годинник	clock
по́кложка, по́кложниця	пості́ль	bed linens
закатло́ха, зака́тлонка, закаплóнниця	скриня, сундук	chest
кули́га	лавка	bench
тре́пез, тре́бух	стіл	table

Household implements seem to be important and are represented by words for:

зівро́, тока́рка, тока́рник	відро	pail
будáвка	голка	needle
закаплóнник	замóк	lock
закаплóнниця, матло́ха	колодка	padlock
капо́шник, закаплóнник	ключ	key
кулóпата	лопата	shovel
замі́нниця, маско́рник	мі́тла	broom
захарбе́ля, захарбани́к, захарбу́т, ші́нка, шенька	мішок	sack
барлши́джник	плуг	plow
трохови́ло, тру́сник	решето	sieve
махли́шник, махли́чник	рі́зак	cutter
розку́льниця, кула́шниця	руши́ниця	rifle
ко́тинь	санки	sled
возмо́нник, ко́тинь	віз	wagon
коти́ло, крути́ло	колесо	wheel
махли́чка	січка́рня	straw cutter
ма́ймура, товпи́га	соки́ра	axe
лопо́тник	ці́п	flail
лекшу́нниця	ступа	stamper
сві́сло	весло	oar
сянка	сві́чка	candle
ся́нко	сві́тло	light
бату́зник	моту́зка	rope
обру́тник	ре́мінь	leather strap
куду́ні	дзвіно́чки	jingle bells
стичник	сті́жок	stack (of sheaves of grain)
трихови́ло, тру́сник	сито	sieve

Religious terminology is fairly abundant and includes words for:

Охве́с, Фе́з, Хвесь	Бог	God
Ставе́р	Христос	Christ
Охве́сова Маниця	Богомати	Theotokos
ся́ний	святий	saint
клю́са	церква	church (Orthodox)
шанда́л	костел	church (Catholic)
клюсна́рка	капли́ця	chapel
клюсна́р	цвинта́р	cemetery
слуго́мка	служба	service
ха́ля	похоро́н	funeral
ре́псальник	пара́стас	parastasis
шумови́на	домови́на	coffin

духóмка	душа	soul
крім	гріх	sin
ша́тер, ша́тар, ша́те́рниця	молитва	prayer
ставро́чини, ставро́шини	молитвини над новородком	purification prayer service of a newborn
ре́псник	акафіст	akathistos
ставро́хи, ставро́ки	христини	christening
кувeстіяне	християни	Christians
клю́сник, ставе́р	хрест	cross
вопа́ра́т	ризи	vestments
вопа́ра́т, о́брут	фелон	phelonion
фeз, охвeс, хвeсь	ікона	icon
ре́псaня	книга	book
кудо́н(ник), кудо́вник	дзвін	Bell
корх	піп	priest
корхилиця, корхиня	попада	priest's wife
корхиля, корхиня, корхиник	попович	priest's son
підпса́льний	піддячий	percentor
пса́льник, пца́йник	дяк	cantor
ла́бор	збирач (пожертв на напpаву церков)	collector (for church repairs)
пaтeрик	свyто	holy day
свyхтá	свyтa	holy days
ша́те́рник	проща, відпуст	pilgrimage
ре́псaнe кітo, ре́псaнкa	писaнкa	Easter egg
спин, термих, хвeртъ	чорт	devil (male)
спиниця	чортиця	devil (female)

Nouns and adverbs that convey temporal concepts have been recorded and can be considered a special category. They include the words for time:

кучас, кузач	час	time
киндик	рік	year
сно́пка	весна	spring
сно́пко	літо	summer
сівениця, сіверка	зима	winter
кудень, кудинь	день	day
куче́рба	вчора	yesterday
куднісь	сьогодні	today
кузавтра	завтра	tomorrow
п'янджатка	п'ятниця	Friday
са́батка	субота	Saturday
ме́ргуля	неділя	Sunday
ме́ргульник	понеділок	Monday
кувечер	вечір	evening
ке́міть, киміть	ніч	night
хвильниця, хвильня	година	hour

Quantitative-spatial nouns include:

ста́вра, ставе́рка	кварта	quart
кума́т	кусе́нь, шмат	piece
кума́точок, куматок	кусок, шматочок	
лоптовина, шоловина	половина	half
пікота́	ріг	corner

Here one can add the word *money* and the names of various currencies:

хóбень хóбні, хóмні, ховби	Гріш гроші	money (sg.), coin money (pl.), coins
галіне́ць, кури́бник, скіте́льник, скіте́льний	карбоване́ць	karbovanets
клі́мтур	гу́льден (ринський)	gulden
двє́ня хобні	копійка	kopek
хóбень	крейца́р	kreuzer
плі́нка, ша́ндрáчка, шму́рка	ші́стка	piece-of-six
охці́йос	сотка	hundred

Besides the aforementioned, there are nouns for such artistic concepts as

пса́льня	пі́сня	song
скако́мка, скако́мник	тане́ць	dance
ре́псаня	письмо́	writing

The lexicon of emotions is limited to

досадо́мка	доса́да	chagrin
пошу́тка	ли́хо	misfortune

while the list of defects consists of

дермо́нка, деро́мка	ді́ра	hole
шму́ра	пля́ма	spot

The list of nouns concludes with toponyms including:

Дильма́н	Дні́стер	Dnister
Шайло́в	Браї́лів	Brailiv
Бучпи́ль	Буча́ч	Buchach
Легуша́ни	Оки́вці	Okivtsi
Дельмо́шник	Пті́к	Potik
Пі́трусянка	Ска́ла	Skala
Шва́хтинці	Ца́півці	Tsapivtsi
Калу́тинці	Черні́вці	Chernivtsi
Буда́вниця	Яго́льниця	Yahol'nytsia

and ethnonyms

гуд(ла́й), гудзь, ге́ц гудла́йка, ге́циха, гудзі́вка гудла́йик, гудзе́ня гудзи́к	євре́й євре́йка євре́йченя євре́йчик	Jew (male) (female) (child) (endearing)
шулі́нці	росі́яни	Russians
ба́туз	моска́ль	Muscovite
клі́мтур	німе́ць	German
ла́нюс, ма́гли́т	попла́к	Pole
куга́н, ша́ндрáк	цига́н	Roma

Cardinal numerals go from *one* to *forty* and then jump to *one hundred*. Numerals from fifty to ninety can be reconstructed and might have been in use, but are not recorded in the dictionary. Of the ordinal numerals, only *first* through *fourth*, and *seventh*, *eight* and *tenth* are attested, although the others could be reconstructed (*) as well.

№	Cardinal	Ordinal
1	іо́н	йо́ний, ю́тний
2	дві́на, двє́ня, дві́ня	дві́ний, двє́нєшний
3	шкіра́, скє́ра, ски́ра	шкі́рий, скє́ре́тній, ски́ра́тний
4	ці́сара, сі́сара	ці́сарий
5	п'я́нджа, п'я́нтжа, пе́нтза	*п'я́нджий
6	ша́ндра	*ша́ндрий

7	сѣмптіна, сімптіна, тімара	сѣптіний
8	вісімптіня, вохкімира, вітімара, отімера	отімерий
9	дівера, дівора	*діверий, *діворий
10	дікуна, дікона	діконий
11	дікона й іон	дікона і йоний
12	дікона й двеня	*дікона й двіний
13	дікона й скерá	*дікона й шкірий
14	дікона й сісара	*дікона й цісарий
15	дікона й пѣнтза	*дікона й п'янджий
16	дікона й шáндра	*дікона й шáндрий
17	дікона й тімара	*дікона й сѣптіний
18	дікона й вітімара	*дікона й отімерий
19	дікона й дівора	*дікона й діворий
20	двеня дікон, двіня дікуна, двіна рáза дікона	*двеня діконий
21	дікона двеня й іон	*діконя двеня й іоний
30	скерá дікон, шкірá рáза дікона	
40	сісара дікон	
50	*п'янджа дікон	
60	*шáндра дікон	
70	*тімара дікон	
80	*вітімара дікон	
90	*дівора дікон	
100	дікона рáза дікона	

Personal pronouns are attested only in the nominative case and in the singular. The third person plural is the one exception to number. As for case, the first and third persons singular can also found in the dative case.

	1 st pers.	2 nd pers.	3 rd pers. masc.	3 rd pers. fem.
Nom. sing.	манькó	біти, тапкó	бівін	бівона
Dat. sing.	манькóві	not attested	бієму	not attested
Nom. plur.	біми, маньки	тапки	not attested	not attested

Possessive pronouns are given only in the first and second person singular,

кумуніський, манейський	мій	my
бітвій	твій	your

and there are several lexemes for the interrogative pronoun:

кóнто(ль), сконд, бішó	що	what
біак	як	how

The demonstrative pronoun is

біцей	цей	this
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The most common adjectives are the ones used to describe physical condition, for example:

гальóмий, вéлий	великий	large
гальóмий	високий	tall
мékрий, махій	малий	small
мекрénький	маленький	tiny
духмóрний	сильний	strong
трóняшний	слабий	weak
сухмóрний	сухий	dry
дулений, дулясний, загрівóшний	теплий	warm
ціхморний	тихий	quiet

сіводний	холодний	cold
цілітний	цілий	whole
кудоровий, нетро́няшний	здоровий	healthy
каліпний	сліпий	blind
тро́няшний	хворий	sick
буций, укираний	п'яний	drunk

(though the last three words could possibly be viewed as nouns). Then we have:

трепéлий	молодий	young
йóрий, іóрий	старий	old
нові́ний, нові́мний, нові́вний	новий	new
цілітний	увесь	all, whole
босивний, босі́вний	босий	barefoot

We have adjectives designating professions such as:

лебі́йський, лобу́рський	лірницький	lirnyk
шуліце́йський, бікуце́льський	поліце́йський	police

and adjectives for social state:

несто́дний	убогий	destitute
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Another adjective group might be the one for characteristics such as:

кле́вий, тре́пе́лий	добрий	good
некле́вий	злий, недобрий	bad
кливе́нський	ласкавий	gracious
сура́зний, сура́ський, ся́йний	гарний	beautiful
козу́мний	розумний	smart
уко́рений	учений	learned
шму́рний	дурний	stupid
крімі́шний, крімова́тий	грішний	sinful
чужі́вний, чужамо́рний	чужий	alien
са́басний, сабасні́й	сам	alone

Other types of adjectives include those describing taste, namely:

(о)мі́ясний	солодкий	sweet
гирки́мний	гіркий	bitter
буквасний	квасний	sour

and those for colors:

плі́ний	білий	white
га́лбин	жовтий	yellow
красі́мний	червоний	red

Verbs can be divided into several semantic fields. Perhaps the largest category is the one with verbs referring to various forms of work such as:

клево́тити	працювати	work
(с)кле́вити	(з)робити	make
право́шити	поправляти	repair, fix
куграти, кургати	грати	play
пса́лити	співати	sing
кумси зіта́ти	жебрати	beg
кубрати, кумси зіта́ти	прошакувати	request alms
слуго́мити, слуго́нити	служити	serve
замі́нчити, маско́рити	замести, замітати	sweep
кле́вити	порядкувати	tidy up
будавчи́ти	шити	sew

курляти, круляти	варити	cook
степурити	пекти	bake
(п)лінчити	прати	laundry
з'яперувати	збирати	gather
копуїти, махлувати	копати	dig
дергómити	молоти	mill
лопóтити	молотити	thresh
барлúджити	орати	plough
лопстирити, пасóрити	пасти (худобу)	herd cattle
дулити, дулясити	палити	burn
махличити, махлувати, макувати	рубати	chop
сухмóрити	сушити	dry
лікóрити, літрити, ліхтóрити	лікувати	heal

Another important category of verbs concerns the body and clothing and what is done with them. This category includes verbs meaning:

троїти	їсти	eat
кучéрити	вечеряти	sup
покусъмóрити	покушати	taste, sample
кус(ь)мóрити, кучмóрити	кусати	bite
бен(н)ити, банити	курити	smoke
хéзити	плювати	spit
лохáтись, люфтáтись	сміятись	laugh
чихмóритись	чесатись	comb
(п)лінчити	мити	wash
(п)лінчитись	купатись	bathe
хизити, вхéзитись	піти на сторону	urinate/defecate
застіжмóрити	засті́бнути	button, fasten
зрутити	скинути	take off
вклéвити, в'яперити	взути	put footwear on
роз'яперити	роззути	take footwear off

A group of verbs describes physical states, in the sense that they are actions performed by a human.

These include:

бéгляти	Бути	be
єпіть, єпить	є	is
нéміть	немає	is not
зітóмити, кирдимити	жити	live
окирдинитись	ожити	revive
встичувати	вставати	arise
пандікáти (на ходуи)	ставати на коліна	kneel
поклюжитись	покластись	lie down
(по)клюжити(сь), кімáрити	лежати	lie, recline
кимати, кімати, кімáрити	спати	sleep
кимати, кімати, кемітáти	ночувати	spend the night
стичити, стóчити	стояти	stand
кáчити	сидіти	sit
слихтити	чути	hear
слухáнити, слихтити	слухати	listen
кéрити, кирити	п'яничити	carouse
сівернути, сівиріти	мерзнути	suffer cold
трунути	боліти	ache
(с)халіти, схаляти	вмерти	die

сянитися	світитися	shine
дулясити, дулити	горіти	burn

Some verbs describe changes of state:

(на)чánити, (з)чánити, зчánювати	зли(ва)ти, (на)лити	pour
прокулати	пробити	pierce
відка́пчити, відкап(л)óнити, одскрипотáти	відімкнути	open
зака́пчити, закаплóнити	замкнути	shut
виюхтити	вийняти	take out
одчипóрити	відчепити	detach
грівóшити, дулити	гріти	heat
сіверити	студити	chill
дермóнити	дерти	tear
заба́тузити	зав'язати	tie
задулити	запалити	light
ламусáти	ламати	break
маскóрити	мастити	grease
дермóнити	рвати	rip
махличити, махлу́вати, маку́вати	різати	cut
клюжити	стелити	spread
трасóмити, тряхóмити, трихóмити	трясти	shake
маскóрити	чистити	clean
ке́міти	смеркати	turn dark
рахтить	падає дощ	rain

Verbs of motion are well represented:

бігу́рати	бігти	run
льикса́ти	лазити	creep
виляксати	вилізти	creep out
пна́ти (пна́ю)	йти	go
попна́ти	піти	depart
хандирити, ханджу́вати	ходити	walk
ханджу́вати	похожати	walk about
ярдну́вати, гардну́вати	їхати	ride
скако́мити	скакати	jump
скі́тити, вски́чувати	тікати	flee
когóнити, кургóнити	гонити	drive
вико́гнити	вигнати	drive out
доко́гнити	догнати	catch up
злобу́ська́ти	зловити	catch
панді́чити, панді́кати	падати	fall
вандзо́рити, вандзи́рити	возити, нести, водити	cart, carry, lead
(ви/пере)вандзо́рити, (ви/пере)вандзи́рити, (ви/пере)вандзи́рувати	(ви/пере)везти	transport (out)
та́гнити, та́ганити, та́нити	нести	carry
клюжити	класти	put
ма́ньчити	минати	pass

There are verbs that refer to communicative acts:

зіта́ти, кантити	говорити	speak
(с)канти́ти,	(с)казати	tell
зіта́ти	мовити	utter
кльиксати, криксати	кричати	shout
ра́псання клéвити, ре́псати	писати	write
ра́псати	читати	read

шмури́ти	дури́ти	fool
аври́дити	б́рехати	lie

A large group of verbs describes various relationships:

прию́хтити	при́йняти	receive
шляга́ти	зводи́ти до купи	bring together
юни́чити, яни́читись	сва́тати(ся)	woo
юни́читися	же́нитися	marry
пору́тити	покину́ти	abandon
(по)зі́кóрити	(по)зичи́ти	borrow
пу́лити, опу́лити, опу́льовати	купува́ти	buy
пропу́лити, пропу́льовати	продава́ти	sell
дя́кнути, дя́хнити, дя́кати, го́рати, угу́рати	да́ти, дава́ти	give
ви́ддо́нити, оддя́хнити, ви́ддя́кнути	ви́дда́ти	return
ви́до́йми́ти, (ви́д'/на)япе́рити, з'япе́рити, в'япе́рити	(ви́ди/на)бра́ти, взя́ти	take
плато́шити	плати́ти	pay
бо́рщу за́парити, ко́зу зве́селять	фундува́ти ви́пивку	buy a round (of drinks)
ха́нджоля́ти	ви́води́ти гагі́лки	dance <i>hahilky</i>
ку́гратись	гра́тися	play

A large number of these verbs refer to immoral or censured behavior and its consequences:

лубу́нитися	сва́ритися	quarrel
клі́мати	кра́сти	steal
(по)ку́лати, ко́псати	(по)би́ти	beat
ке́рити, ки́рити	пи́ти, п'яни́чити	drink (to excess)
позві́нчува́ти	позива́ти до су́ду	sue
уту́хмо́рити, заду́хмо́мити	заду́шити	throttle
заку́лати	вби́ти	kill
всно́пити	вто́пити	drown
вде́льчи́тись	вто́питися	drown oneself
заба́тузитися, пові́хто́митися	пові́ситися	hang oneself

Verbs that describe intellectual activities are relatively few:

(на)вко́ритись	(на)вчи́тися	learn
сю́рати, сі́врати	зна́ти, розу́міти	know, understand
скума́ти	у́міти	know how to
лі́трити, лі́хто́рити	числи́ти	count
помі́нчити	помину́ти	recall
забегля́ти(ся)	забу́ти(ся)	forget

Likewise, there are few verbs that express emotions:

(ви)зі́тати	(ви)про́сити	request
во́літи, во́лити, во́їти	хоті́ти	want
кизі́тати	благати́	entreat
кульба́ти	лю́бити	love
хали́сати	ці́лувати	kiss
ню́ньчити	пести́ти	fondle
пли́ксити, кикса́ти	пла́кати	weep
кльи́ксати, кри́ксати	пла́кати з кри́ком	wail
зшму́ріти	здурі́ти	go mad
хе́зитись, скити́тися	ска́зитися, всте́ктися	rage

A verb that might be included in this category is

сте́кляти, сля́кати, пастикля́ти	жда́ти, підо́ждати	wait
досля́катись	ді́ждатися	wait to a conclusion

There remains a small group of abstract verbs:

назікóритись	називатися	be called
єпіти	коштувати	cost
ма́ньчити	мати	have
(об)на́хтити, шукморити	(об)шукати	search
(з)на́хтити	(з)найти	find

As with nouns, there is a significant number of verbs dealing with religion:

ставро́читися	христитися	cross one's self
право́шити	правити (службу)	conduct a service
кудо́нити	дзвонити	ring bells
кизіта́ти	молитися	pray
ша́тер зіта́ти	мовити молитву	recite a prayer

The verbs *kneel*, *read* and *ring* might be included here for a second time because of their possible use in religious contexts.

Many adverbs are derived from adjectives, but their number is limited:

по́со	багато	much
мурго́м, пурго́м	бігом	on the run
близі́мно, кублизько	близько	nearby
куві́зно	важко	with difficulty
бі́вже	вже	already
все́ньки, всяцки	все	everything
сно́пно	гаряче	hot(ly)
шале́ко	далеко	far
кле́ве, кле́во	добре	well
сі́верно, сі́водно	холодно, зимно	cold(ly)
некле́во	недобре	badly
сно́пно	парно	steamy
ме́хенький помекле́нько	помаленьку	slowly
сяно	свято	solemnly, holy
по́со	чимало	much
мурго́м, пурго́м	швидко	rapidly

As mentioned above, no prepositions, conjunctions, interjections or particles are attested in the corpus.

Whether the purpose of the Lebian language was to hide secret activities or to serve as a way for minstrels to recognize one another, we can be assured that it was used only to discuss matters important in the lives of minstrels. This being the case, we see that the language mirrored minstrel life, the work that they did, and the surroundings in which they lived and worked.

The language confirms that the center of minstrel life was the village. This is where most minstrel personal and professional activity took place and most Lebian words are those associated with village life. Minstrels, we know, did travel to towns and cities. Their activities there were similar to those in villages except for their interaction with civil authorities. The language shows us this by the fact that the only vocabulary specifically tied to urban areas is that for city and town officials and offices.

Minstrels apparently ate reasonably well, or were at least familiar with quite a variety of dishes. The language shows us this in the fact that the list of dishes, especially if one includes edible plants and animals, is quite extensive. Again, this is the food of the Ukrainian village, but this is not everyday food and one can well

imagine that this was not the musicians' typical meal. We know that minstrels were asked to perform at various feasts, especially christenings and weddings, a fact that is again reflected in Lebian vocabulary. During a festival, especially a family event such as a wedding or a baptism, even a poor peasant would do his utmost to receive his guests, including the musicians, as best as he could. Thus, the food terminology includes or even privileges, dishes served as part of celebrations; it is not quotidian food vocabulary.

The list of clothing is not remarkable in any way and we will not comment on it here except to point out that it, too, reflects village life in that it includes men's and women's garments typically found in a rural setting.

The verbs attested in Lebian confirm the centrality of village life and give us some interesting additional information. The verbs that describe work are those that refer to the typical activities of peasants and village craftsmen. The number of verbs related to work might support Kononenko's supposition that work was central to village life and that the blind minstrel's inability to do the sort of work that defined a peasant weighed heavily on his conscience (3-15). The large number of verbs dealing with immoral or illicit behavior is quite striking. On the one hand, this might suggest that the conspiracy theory is correct and that minstrels did engage in activities that needed to be kept secret from others. On the other hand, it is just as likely musicians were the victims of illegal and immoral acts, not the perpetrators of them. Verbs also confirm that the church was an important institution in minstrel life. We know that the life of the musicians was often connected to the church and that their guilds were church-affiliated. Christenings, weddings, and funerals, of course, took place in the church and various churches and monasteries were the sites of festivals dedicated to their patron saints. At the times of such festivals, churches and monasteries were the sites of pilgrimages, attracting both minstrels and potential minstrel audiences (Kononenko, 133-52). If one adds to this the fact that *kobzari* and *lirnyky*, along with other members of the brotherhoods of the poor, often found refuge in church hospitals, then the large ecclesiastical vocabulary in Lebian should hardly be surprising.

Our analysis of the Lebian language should also consider what it lacks. One interesting fact is that, while this language was an argot, a code which allowed free conversation on such otherwise taboo subjects as sex, it did not include a verb for sexual intercourse. Perhaps there was such a verb, but it has not been recorded.

There is a rather rich vocabulary of ethnonyms, showing that minstrels dealt with many groups. Still, certain ethnic terms are lacking. The absence of words for Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, Romanian or Belarusian is not surprising because the musicians might not have had much to do with these peoples. But it is interesting that the word *Ukrainian* or even *Rusyn* are lacking. The reason for this may be that national consciousness was poorly developed in those times. The musicians seemed to know who they were *not*, but they did not know who they were.

Only the most important items of clothing are named in Lebian, but there is no word for *shirt*. Perhaps the word for shirt is missing because this garment appears frequently in minstrel songs where, of course, it is named using the normal Ukrainian terminology. While a shirt was an everyday garment, it apparently had special meaning for minstrels. A number of begging songs sought to arouse the pity of listeners by referring to the minstrel's nakedness and making a specific request for a shirt. (Kononenko 17-19) This would imply, and Lebian confirms, that *shirt* had a significance for minstrels beyond its function as a garment. Thus the special

meaning that a shirt held for minstrels would argue for its encoding. The fact that the incentive to encode seems outweighed by the appearance of “shirt” in songs might support the argument that Lebian was used to hide minstrel activities from ordinary folk.

The lack of terms for internal organs may be surprising. By the same token, discussions of these parts of the body were probably more appropriate to a minstrel’s relationship with a healer or a physician, not to a conversation with other *kobzari* and *lirnyky*. Likewise, only two serious illnesses are named - *typhus* and *cholera*. Perhaps at the time the language was recorded these diseases posed a serious threat whereas others were less important. Also it is interesting that aside from *blindness*, no physical handicaps are named.

There is no word for *autumn* in Lebian. Was this a season when nothing happened in the lives of the musicians? Very likely so: During this season the peasants who constituted a minstrel’s primary audience were too busy to have the time to listen to a performance (Kononenko 11). There are no words for *morning*, nor for the days from *Tuesday* to *Thursday*. This probably reflects the days that minstrels worked and the time of day that they did their begging. It has already been noted that church festivals constituted important occasions for minstrels. These likely occurred on weekends, not in the middle of the week. Similarly, a big secular occasion for minstrel activity, the village or town fair, was more commonly a weekend affair (Kononenko 13-14). As for the time of day, it either reflects begging times or the times that minstrels interacted with each other. In addition to fairs and festivals, minstrels also worked by going from house to house. When they did so, they likely waited until morning chores were done before approaching. And it is in the afternoon or evening, after a days work, that they were likely to gather amongst themselves, either for support and comfort on the road or to conduct guild activities.

The system of numerals can be reconstructed up to one *hundred*. This may well indicate that the musicians' earnings were so meager that small numerals sufficed.

Since minstrels were blind musicians they probably did not need words for color to discuss items and objects in their surroundings. Still, three color terms: *white*, *yellow*, and *red* have been recorded. These might well come from minstrel songs, specifically historical songs and epics (*dumy*) which depict fallen heroes, dying on the battle field, and speak of their white flesh, yellow bone, and red blood. But if colors appear in songs, like the word for shirt, why not omit encoding them, as the word for shirt is not encoded? Perhaps the three encoded colors had meanings beyond denoting hue. Perhaps they were designations of quality of which we are no longer aware. And does the existence of color terminology mean that minstrel poetry was composed by sighted bards? This question has been a topic of much scholarly debate and will not be addressed here.

This analysis of the Lebian language shows that it is a powerful source of information about the lives of Ukrainian minstrels. Minstrels were an important part of Ukrainian culture, but information about them is scant. There are many reasons for this. As already noted, minstrels belonged to guilds which required apprenticeship and thus a certain degree of exclusion of those who had not be properly initiated. But even when minstrels were willing to talk to outsiders such as scholars, many would not listen, considering information about folk performers unimportant. Now that we know about oral composition and the role of minstrels as tradition bearers, gathering information about them is too late because the old system of guilds for the blind is gone. We

must draw on already collected sources and many of these are descriptions provided by scholars; they are not the words of the minstrels themselves. The dictionaries of the Lebian language compiled by Horbach and others are actual minstrel words. As such, they give us a more intimate glimpse of minstrel life, and it is reassuring that this glimpse confirms the descriptions that we do have available. Our look at the secret lexicon of minstrels confirms that their world revolved around the village and that the church and religious events were important. We even learn something about what they ate, if not on a regular basis, then on holidays. We see the days of the week that they probably worked and we can extrapolate information about their view of the body and clothing, including clothing items that might have carried a symbolic value. Lebian provides us a much more direct view into the lives of minstrels than we might hope to get through any other source.

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